

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
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## **Public Affairs Office**

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# **MEDICARE NEWS**

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### **NURSING HOMES MUST POST STAFFING INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES**

Beginning January 1, nursing homes across America will have to publicly post the number of nursing staff they have on duty to care for patients on each daily shift.

A letter sent to all nursing homes around the country today by Tom Scully, administrator of the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) enforces a provision of the Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 (BIPA) that requires nursing facilities to post the number of licensed and unlicensed nursing staff directly responsible for resident care. Licensed and unlicensed nursing staff includes: registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nurse aides.

“Posting staffing information gives families one more piece of information they can use to help them decide which home is right for their loved ones,” Scully said. “This congressionally mandated posting falls right in line with our nursing home quality initiative by arming families with information about how nursing homes in their areas operate.”

CMS is developing a regulation that will outline the required format and content of the daily postings. The agency sent nursing homes a suggested format for the postings, but until that regulation is effective, homes can use their own discretion in designing them.

Today’s action is consistent with the goals of the Nursing Home Quality Initiative launched by Health and Human Services in November to improve the quality of care provided in nursing facilities. As part of the initiative CMS published the results of 10 quality measures for each of the nearly 17,000 nursing facilities across the nation. During a pilot of the initiative (run prior to the national rollout) over 70 percent of nursing homes in the pilot began some type of quality improvement program.

CMS is the agency within the federal Department of Health and Human Services that oversees the Medicare, Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Programs.

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